

## **A Report on Christmas Campaign 2021 (Project No. NL00XY001)**

### **Background**

FNV supported Christmas Campaign 2021 (Project No. NL00XY001), commonly called Granny's project was implemented by the unions of the National Alliance for Domestic Workers in four states; Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Delhi. This project was exclusively for domestic women workers above the age of 60 years. Their work-life journey is almost in the ending stage, and society is not offering them security and respect. Under the project, through Alliance, a one-time direct account transfer of INR 7500 was provided to the 300 beneficiaries, the old and needy domestic workers. A specific format was developed for beneficiaries and sent on 12th April 2022, to all four states. The unions in the project states implemented this project in the respective focus areas by identifying domestic workers who needed this support.

The domestic workers remain the most underpaid and overworked section of the workforce, with little or no bargaining power. As they become old, they lose their jobs or are unable to work due to age-related health issues. An equally large number of aged domestic workers depend on their families, and many lead a life of penury and helplessness. For some, there is no family support for living alone. There are numerous problems, and it is challenging to pay house rent, arrange food, and take care of themselves for their remaining life. The needs of old domestic workers are different, and they face problems related to shelter, food, health, and social security. Many aged domestic workers still try to work despite their bad health and personal and family issues as they find it challenging to lead an everyday life. The old domestic workers need access to social security, which is not reaching them. They are facing the issue of shelter, food, health amenities, and social security. After a lifetime of caring for others, domestic workers need dignity at their fag end of life. Society and the State do not offer them any support, social security, or dignity. The 'National Alliance for Domestic Workers is committed to supporting the sustainability of old domestic workers.

In states like Karnataka the Union was already focusing on the issues of old domestic workers before this project was initiated on the issue of old domestic workers. The following sections provide state-wise descriptions.

### **Karnataka**

The Domestic Workers' Rights Union in Karnataka facilitated the direct transfer of financial support to 150 domestic workers identified by the Union. The identified domestic workers were in poor health and did not get any government help or from anywhere. The Union also provided medicines and dry ration kits to all the senior domestic workers. Few old domestic workers were also provided with counselling and family meetings organised by the Union to support them in their struggle for a dignified life. The Union is informally running elder workers collectives and organising health camps, eye check-ups, and food programs.

In Karnataka, a day-care centre was created where old domestic workers met, interacted, socialised, and shared their problems and experiences. Some income-generating training programmes were also conducted in the past, along with health camps, eye check-ups, food security programs, and 'adopt a Granny', but they were shelved due to a lack of resources. The Union is running a day-care centre with the primary objective is giving old domestic workers space for change and dignity in life. This day Care space was named Granny's Corner to symbolise their corner or hub to be them. This space was visualised as a space for their independency, sharing feelings, exchanging information, respecting their emotions and values,

together chatting and having a discussion, and sharing life journeys and experience, their courage and inspiration stories make others feel better, will break down the loneliness within the self.

Many senior domestic workers lost their jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic. During COVID-19, these women were not treated well because of their old age, many lost jobs and lived in poor conditions, and many were forced to vacate their houses by landlords. Finally, the Union intervened got, waived house rent, and eviction was stopped.

The Union organised a protest in front of the DC Office, Kandayabhavan, and Taluk office, the union delegation handed over their demand to provide pension to senior domestic workers, and after a big struggle, they received their pension.

### **Rajasthan**

The Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union, based in the Jaipur district of Rajasthan, facilitated the direct transfer of financial support to 50 old domestic workers. The survey conducted by the Union identified the domestic workers who required financial support. It was observed in the study that elderly domestic worker women are in poor health conditions, and older women have been out of a job. The conditions of the identified old domestic workers were very pathetic. The Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union conducted a survey regarding elderly domestic workers. The Union also discussed the issues and problems faced by elderly domestic workers. Many of these women had lost their jobs and were in dire straits to survive.

A list was prepared and provided to the government by the Union for support to bring the government's attention to this. In the past, the Union had already informed them about the problems of old domestic workers to the government many times. The Union also organised several meetings regarding this problem with the authorities. Due to the union intervention, the pension facilities for a few elderly and widowed domestic workers women were provided by the government.

In the Jaipur district, the number of such older women is close to a hundred, and they do not have access to social security. Due to COVID-19, these elderly women lost their jobs. Financial assistance was provided to the elderly women who did not have any means of earning their livelihoods. Many of the older women live in small rented rooms under challenging circumstances. Poor health condition was an essential criterion for identifying the beneficiaries. Due to fewer resources with the Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union, the Union could not help all women. The conditions of the elderly domestic worker were tough and odd. Fifty elderly domestic workers were identified and provided direct financial support who were currently unemployed and at this fragile stage of insecurity and isolation.

### **Delhi**

The Delhi-based Union, Delhi Gharelu Kaamkaji Mahila Union, identified old domestic workers in their focus areas who needed help, shelter, food, and health requirements. The Union identified beneficiaries from 5 areas of Delhi; Rangpuri Pahari, Shankar Camp, Dalit Ekta Camp, Priyanka Gandhi Camp, and Kusumpur Pahari. Financial help was provided to many of them who were abandoned, uncared, or did not have the support of family members and also keeping bad health a factor and those in poor living conditions. Altogether 50 old domestic workers were provided financial help.

As a special case, three below 60 years of age were also helped as they dire need financial support due to bad health. Unfortunately, one of the beneficiaries died soon after receiving the financial help. COVID-19 was one of the factors which left many old domestic workers unemployed. For the last two years, they do not have work, as there are many domestic workers ready to grab jobs.

As there is no facility from the government, the Union is also trying to facilitate access to the schemes run by the government, like an old-age pension which could have been a support to the domestic workers that is only available to a few of them. The government schemes, facilities, and benefits do not reach domestic workers. The Union also generated awareness about the government schemes, and the Union is trying to get the benefits of schemes to make the life of old domestic workers a little easier. The Union has assured the domestic workers that it will always support them. The Union initiated monthly meetings with the old domestic workers. The Union also organised a health camp for health check-ups of all the old domestic workers. The Union also arranged rations for the old domestic workers. The Union supports and asserts their dignity, respect, livelihood, recognition, and equality.

### **Maharashtra**

Learn Mahila Kamgaar Sanghatana (LMKS), Maharashtra, conducted meetings with union leaders in Mumbai and Nashik to inform them about the project. For the implementation of this project, 50 domestic women workers of 60 years and above were selected, 25 from Mumbai and 25 from Nasik. The identified domestic workers were in poor health, low in the social hierarchy, suffering from health issues, and unemployed due to old age. Many identified old domestic workers did not have income, and their families did not support them and lived alone with difficulties in paying rent, arranging food, and taking care of their health issues/emotional issues.

The identification process was inclusive for all caste of domestic workers categories like house ownership or rented, living with relatives, sons, and abandonment were taken into consideration for identification of beneficiaries. After the identification process, a meeting with beneficiaries was conducted, and information was provided with financial help.

The government does not provide any assistance to old-aged domestic workers. Employment was lost during lockdown affecting the old age domestic workers. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, these old domestic workers used to do some work, but during and after the pandemic, they lost their income.

### **Implementation of the project**

1. To implement this project, a budget was proposed by the Alliance. The alliance partners will support 150 old domestic workers in Bangalore, 50 in Maharashtra, 50 in Jaipur, and 50 in Delhi.
2. A survey will be conducted by the implementing unions to identify the needy, unsupported, vulnerable, and dependent domestic workers to provide a one-time direct transfer of financial support of a fixed amount for their maintenance and welfare.
3. An emergency union fund will be created by the one-time contribution of 500 rupees by the old domestic workers that will be deposited in the bank. It could be used in future health check-up camps and other relevant activities for old domestic workers.

4. Three hundred old domestic workers fill up beneficiary formats containing their bank and other details and also provide passport-size photographs and other required documents for transferring money to the BVD office for audit purposes. BVD will provide the format.
5. Bal Vikas Dhara made a format in which the details of beneficiaries, names, addresses, bank details, and ID proof were also attached.

Delhi







Karnataka







Rajasthan





**Maharashtra**

